THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) and (b) During the last two decades, there have been 14 cases of hijackings of Indian Airlines aircraft. Comparable Airlines-wise figures of other Airlines are not available.

(c) and (d) None of the staff of Indian Airlines (IA) has been held responsible for any lapse relating to hijack of IA aircraft so far.

Construction of Airport at Ajmer

1215. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the then Civil Aviation Minister in 1997-98 announced to build a domestic Airport in Ajmer (Rajasthan); if so, the action taken so far, in this regard; and

(b) whether Government intends to build an Airport in Ajmer to provide facilities to the pilgrims and tourists in view of the international importance of Dargah Khwaja Saheb Ajmer and Pushkar?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Ajmer has excellent rail and road connections. It is only 136 Kms. away from Jaipur. Under the existing policy, no green field airport is to be developed within an aerial distance of 150 kms of an existing airport.

Provision of Anti-Hijacking Squad in Hijacked IA Plane

1216. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the hijacked aircraft of Indian Airlines taken to Kabul was provided with anti-hijacking squad; and

(b) whether the ATC at Amritsar Airport failed to properly instruct the pilot of the hijacked aircraft?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Upon receiving information of a contingency, the ATC is required to notify Watch Supervisor/Aerodrome Officer and has to comply with the following:—

(i) Do not question the pilot but be responsive to his requests;

(ii) Monitor the aircraft and use normally hand-off procedure without requiring transmissions or responses by the pilot unless he has established communications;

(iii) If aircraft are dispatched to intercept and escort the unlawfully seized aircraft, provide all possible assistance to the intercepting aircraft to aid in placing them in a position behind and above the seized aircraft.

The ATC is also required to try and collect operational intelligence regarding the identity of the airline, number of passengers, identity of the hijackers and weapons, likely destination, fuel, instructions given by the hijackers and their intentions etc. This information is required for Crisis Management Bodies. ATC itself is not required to manage the crisis.

Daily Air Service between Delhi and Kullu

1217. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that daily service is not being operated on Delhi-Kullu route thereby not meeting the requirements of passengers of that sector at present;

(b) whether Government are considering to augment the number of flights in that sector; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) At present, only Indian Airlines is operating air services on Delhi-Kullu-Delhi sector on 3 days per week. However, Indian Airlines has no plans to increase the frequency, due to capacity constraints.

(b) and (c) Operators are free to operate on any route in their commercial judgement subject to compliance with the Route Dispersal Guidelines which provide for certain minimum operations on various category of routes.

Time-frame for Privatisation of Airports

1218. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the policy of Government regarding privatisation of major Airports in the country;